

THE WORD
The word "mob" is an abbreviation. It is nothing but a fragment of the full Latin original "mobile vulgus" — "the sickle common people." First the noun "vulgus" was dropped. "Mobile," coming into common use, was in a few years cut down to "mob." By Swift it was abridged to his dying day as a peculiarly odious kind of slang. Addison sympathized with this feeling. In No. 135 of the Spectator "mob" is put down by him as one of the ridiculous words which he fears will in time be looked upon as part of the speech. There must have been then a host of minor defenders of the purity of our tongue who bemoaned its increasing use and pointed to that fact as evidence of the growing degeneracy of the language. But the assailed form stoutly held its ground and outlived its censurers. Addison's fears have been realized. The abbreviation has thoroughly established itself. Accordingly a word which their predecessors stigmatized as a corruption of the vilest kind is now used unhesitatingly by the most precise of modern jurists. The reason of its prevalence is obvious. It came to supply a very genuine want. There is no other single word that conveys definitely the idea of a particular sort of riotous assemblage.—Harper's.

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK.

An Ancient Phrase That Has Many Phases of Meaning.
The phrase "by hook or by crook" may simply refer to an ancient custom which allowed persons to collect for fuel dead wood in the king's forest such as they could break off and remove with "cart, hook and crook." Some trace its significance "by foul means or by fair" to the contrasted uses of the footpad's hook or the bishop's crook.
Others remind us of the expression in very early days "by huke o'er krooke"—that is, by bending the knees and crouching low.
Another plausible explanation is that after the great fire of London disputes as to ownership of land were settled by two surveyors whose names were Hook and Crook.
Quite different is the view taken by those who tell us that when Strongbow sailed for Ireland he instructed his men to make their attack by Hook, a promontory northeast of Waterford, or by Crook, a harbor on the south coast.
In any case, the phrase is very old, for it was used by Bacon (1550), by Skelton, the poet laureate (1500), and by Chaucer nearly 600 years ago.—Pearson's.

LUNAR SCENERY.

Its Appearance Proves the Moon's Lack of Air and Water.
It is by indirect methods of observation that scientists learn of the absence of atmosphere in the moon. There are various arguments that can be adduced, but the most conclusive is that obtained on the occurrence of a star. It sometimes happens that the moon comes directly between the earth and a star, and the temporary extinction of the latter is an occultation. We can observe the movement when it takes place, and the suddenness of the extinction of the star is extremely remarkable. If the moon had a copious atmosphere, the gradual interposition of this would produce a gradual extinction of the star and not the sudden phenomenon usually observed.
This absence of air and water from the moon explains the peculiar and weird ruggedness of the lunar scenery. We know that on the earth the action of the wind and of rain, of frost and of snow is constantly tending to wear down our mountains and reduce their hard outlines, but no such agents are at work upon the moon.

A Typical Bonaparte.
Princess Mathilde was a typical Bonaparte. Beneath the skin of a grande dame there dwelt the soul of a vivandiere. She was generous and tempestuous. Something of a butt in her prime, as a certain rather pronounced passage in Lord Malmesbury's reminiscences shows, she was universally admitted at the same time to possess taste and a knowledge of the arts. It was to her credit, too, that she cared not a snap of her fingers for dynastic disputes. She was on the friendliest of terms with the Duc d'Angoulême and is said to have tried, but in vain, to conciliate some of the stiffer branches of the puzzle-headed Bourbon family. Altogether, she was a woman who lived every moment of her life.—London Outlook.

Is Brute Creation Wiser?
Every living bird and beast strives its utmost to cram itself with food before retiring for the night, and this food is digested as the night progresses. The evening feed is the feed of the day with the brute creation, and yet doctors tell us to refrain from eating heartily at night and even advise us to retire to rest with a more or less empty stomach. Are we following nature when following this advice?—English Country Gentleman.

Too Good to Miss.
"I suppose the hero and heroine of that story got married in the last chapter?" she said.
"No, divorced," replied her friend.
"Oh, how lovely! Will you let me borrow it when you get through?"—Exchange.

Pleased at Last.
"Was your last mistress satisfied with you?" Servant—Well, mum, she said she was very well pleased when I left.—Stray Stories.

HEREDITARY
Precedence in England as it struck an American Girl.
I knew a young American girl who, going to England under the care of an ambassador's family and attending her first large dinner party and looking about her, selected as the guest in the room who most interested her one man of distinguished aspect, whom she resolved to watch. When the guests were ushered into the dining hall according to the laws of precedence she found herself at the very end of the brilliant procession in the room, assigned to the escort of the very man who had interested her and who turned out to be Samuel Rogers, the poet and patron of art and the recognized head of literary society in England. She always said that she secured two things at that entertainment—namely, the most delightful companion that she ever had at a dinner party and, moreover, a lesson in the outcome of mere hereditary rank that would last a lifetime. Rogers' poems are not now read so much as formerly, but at that time the highest literary honor a man could have was to dine with Rogers. He was also one of the richest bankers in London and was very possibly the only person in the room who had won for himself a reputation outside of his own little island, but he was next to nobody in that company, and the little American girl was the nobody.—Thomas Wentworth Higginson in Atlantic.

SEED IS NATURE'S GEM.

It Is the One Priceless Jewel in Her Treasure House.
In nature's great treasure house the seed is the one priceless gem. Compared to it the great deposits of coal, the mines of silver and gold and of diamonds and precious stones are as nothing. Man counts his wealth in dollars and cents, in mining and railroad shares and in houses and lands, while his primal necessities are limited to food and clothing. Without these all other tokens of affluence are void. These indeed are the sources of true wealth, and the grass of the field supplies them all directly or indirectly.
The cereal grains—wheat, rye, oats, barley, rice and Indian corn—which are the seeds of true grasses, are convertible directly into food. The succulent leaves and culm of the wild grasses furnish sustenance to millions of cattle, sheep and goats and are transformed by them into flesh, milk, wool and hides, thus indirectly providing meat and clothing. They also protect the soil from flood and drought and landslide. Sending their fibrous roots down among the shifting sands of the seashore, they bind the unstable particles into a mass so dense as to check the erosion of the waves. Thus grass, the synonym of frailty, is able to raise its tiny green scepter against the destructive power of the elements.—Outing.

A Nest Retort.
Dean Farrar soon after he went to St. Margaret's, Westminster, was dining at Professor Jowett's and toward dessert took up the parable against Dives. His voice rose higher and higher, he spread silence around him, and he was heard thundering out: "What I complain of as a clergyman is that I have to do what no layman has to do. I have to beg and beg in vain. Fashionable ladies come to my church glittering with precious gems, and yet they will not sacrifice one diamond from their grand tiaras in order to save some erring sister from destruction." When he finished the silence grew sultry. All the hearers looked gloomily at their plates. Then Jowett, who had been looking as though he meant mischief, squeaked out, "What I object to as a clergyman is that I have to exaggerate so!"—St. James Gazette.

Death Scenes in Poetry.
Poets are, if possible, worse offenders in the matter of their death scenes than are novelists. A man pulls a two dram vial of some poison from his breast, swallows the contents, proceeds to make a 200 line speech without a pang or a gasp, staggers gracefully backward to a conveniently placed seat, drops upon it, clasps the region of the heart with both hands and dies after a little convulsive movement of the legs. Heart disease, too, carries off heroines in a fashion quite unknown to doctors, and, although it is of the variety known as "broken heart," has characteristics which must not be generally associated with fracture of so important an organ.—British Medical Journal.

His First Shad.
Abner Stone had lived "inland" all his days and knew all there was to be known about pork and beef as articles of food. His acquaintance with the products of the sea, on the other hand, was very slight. Once, however, when at the seashore he was introduced to shad and asked how he liked it.
"Well," said the old farmer, with a brave attempt at a smile, "I calculate I shall when I get kinder wonted to it, mebbe, but it does seem, jest at first, ye know, considerable like tryin' to eat a paper o' buttered pins!"

Rarely Experienced.
"We want a man for our information bureau," said the manager, "but he must be one who can answer all sorts of questions and not lose his head."
"That's me," replied the applicant.
"I'm the father of eight children," Philadelphia Ledger.

The three things most difficult are to keep a secret, to forget an injury and to make good use of leisure.

One loses all the time which he might employ to better purpose.—Rousseau.

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